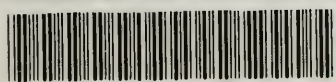


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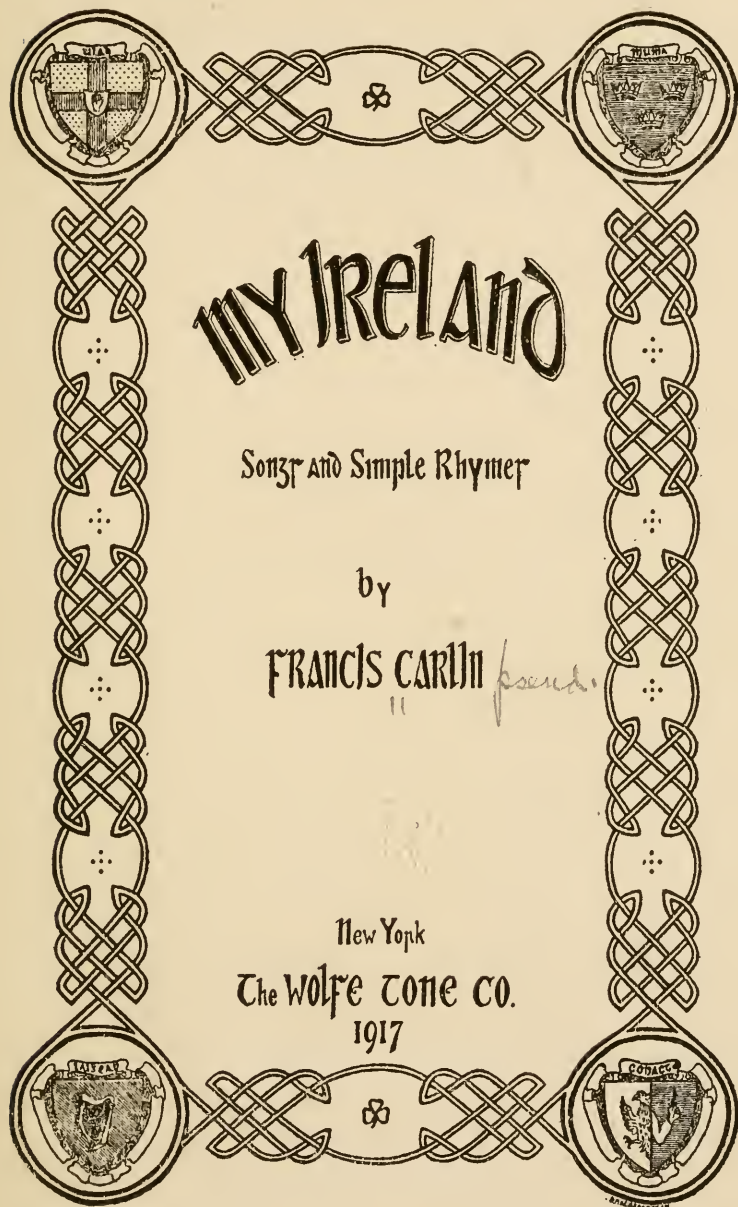




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MY IRELAND

Mac Donnell, James Francis Carli
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It is here that the book begins
and it is here that a prayer is asked
for the soul of the scribe who wrote it for
the glory of God,
the honor of Erinn
and the pleasure of the woman
who came from Both—
his mother.

“I have loved Erinn of the Waters, all that is in
it but its government.”

—*St. Columcille.*

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MY IRELAND

My Ireland is mine for all
The ghostly chiefs who ride for Her;
The women still at Limerick's wall,
And the poets who provide for Her.
The ghostly chiefs who ride for Her,
The poets who provide for Her,
My Ireland is mine for all
The Dublin men who died for Her.

My Ireland is mine in truth
For all the saints who clung to Her;
The patriots who died in youth,
And the harpers who have sung to Her.
The holy saints who clung to Her,
The harpers who have sung to Her,
My Ireland is mine in truth
Because I would be hung for Her.

My Ireland is wholly mine
For all the Lovers shot for Her:
O God may Love and Death define
The poems I begot for Her!
The Lovers who were shot for Her,
The poems I begot for Her,
My Ireland is wholly mine
Because this world is not for Her.

THE DUBLIN POETS

They called their Love with the Sound
Of a Harp in vain,
For the heart of Erinn was bound
By the Clinks of a Chain ;
But the soul of her is free,
And they knew she would come,
When they played their Poetry
In the Roll of a Drum.

God ! that her heart should fail,
That her soul, O Lord,
Should be weeping now for each Gael
Whose song is a Sword
Since they called their Love ; but she
Came on, as comes
This dream of her to me
With muffled drums.

THE STILLY SEA

My Love has crossed an Ocean,
O'er which no breezes blow,
And I would it had the motion
Of but an ebb and flow.

My Love is o'er a Water,
A calm and tideless sea,
And I would that I had taught her
To come in dreams to me.

SHE OF THE MUSICAL NAMES

No instrument is friendly with my hand,
For savage strings by me were never tamed ;
Nor have these lips a lyric ever framed
Befitting Erinn, long my Ireland.
And yet the smouldering soul of me is fanned
To a fiery passion, willingly inflamed,
When some old Gaelic melody is named
Before the notes come blowing from the band.

O Lady, whom the bards call Kathaleen,
Sweet Banba of the silky mantle's sound,
And Fodla of the whisper that inflames ;
You are to me that rare dark Rosaleen,
For whom I would be singing poems, found
In the numerous-noted music of your names.

THE DEAF-MUTE SERMON

In silence which no weighted sound could plumb,
I sat before the pulpit, while a son
Of canonized Ignatius deftly spun
A sermon with quick fingers and a thumb ;
And seated there among the deaf and dumb
It seemed to me, remembering Babylon
Of the many living languages, that none
Became so much that Stilly State to come :

For at the Benediction, music pealed
A chant of mighty chords, and suddenly

The Cleric to his only hearer sang,
As sung a lark one distant morn to me
O'er the Deaf and Tongueless lying in their field,
While the Irish bells of Limerick loudly rang.

BALLAD OF THE BEES¹

Beneath the oaks of Oriel
In times now out of mind,
There lived a holy Cleric who
For knowledge ever pined.

For he was always in the woods,
And there among the trees
His soul was often lost within
Wild Nature's mysteries.

Upon a pretty Summer day
While larks were high and loud,
A Christian lay upon his bed
With one hand in his shroud.

So with the Blessed Flesh of Christ
Beneath his mantle's fold,
The Cleric took the softest fields
For grey he was and old.

As on he went by a fragrant hedge,
Most suddenly he saw
An alien swarm of bees that hung
From the branches of a haw.

“Now,” said the Cleric, “verily
Strange foreigners I’ve found.”
And saying so he took the pyx
And laid it on the ground.

And saying so, he quickly cast
His mantle on the limb
From which he took the noisy swarm
That seemed so strange to him.

And saying so, he wondered much
As to his cell he went,
Where long he tried to think of where
He left the Sacrament.

Now badly went that deed with him
And deeply he did pray,
And full of heart he fretted through
Four seasons and a day.

One morn—a pretty day it was—
While larks were high and loud,
The Cleric lay upon his bed
With one hand in his shroud.

And unto him an Angel came
With a Dawn-star in each eye,
Clad in the green that is unknown
Save on a morning sky.

“I bring you peace,” the Angel said,
And a bell rang in each word ;
“O Cleric do you mind the hour
When Nature was your Lord?”

“With shame and sorrow well I do,”
Replied the dying man ;
Then the Angel in a tuneful voice
This story strange began.

“It happened once a swarm of bees
From good St. Baroc’s ground,
Was captured by a Cleric who
Would study what he found.”

“But while he knelt at holy prayer
They flew as one away,
And settled ’neath a hedge of haws
Where Christ’s dear Body lay :”

“Where lay the Blessed Flesh of Christ
Within a pyx of gold,
Left in the hurry of his thoughts
By someone grey and old.”

“A comb they made around the Host,
And in the little hive
They built a chapel all of wax
And waxen altars five.”

“And bees were set before the shrine
To guard that holy place,
Where dewy webs of gossamer
Are spread like altar-lace.”

“And there each scented flower is
A fragrant chalice now,
Where breezes blow such incense as
Comes from a haw-thorn bough.”

“For nothing came a-near the hive
Save children in their play,
And what the bees found 'neath the hedge
They guard until this day.”

“Now God be praised,” the Cleric cried,
And high his breast did heave ;
“ 'Tis what I think that holy sight
Would make most men believe.”

“For the pagan Gaels have open hearts
To which God needs no keys,
And their souls are often lost within
Wild Nature's mysteries.”

“So I shall preach that pretty tale,
For I would have it told—”
But a broken bell rang in each word
For grey he was and old.

ROSE KAVANAGH

(1859-1891)

O slumbering Poet, how could I
Who travel thoughtfully alone,
Be on my dreams and pass you by
In your Tyrone?

For you have sung of much to me
In the Womanful of Song you gave
To the patriotic memory
Of Emmet's grave.

And I would sing of much to you
In the Spiritful of Lyrics, brought
Through Ulster as I travel to
Your grave in thought.

For, slumbering Poet, I would thrill
Your dreams, as you have thrilled my own,
Rose Kavanagh of Knockmany Hill
In our Tyrone.

THE FOSTER MOTHER

Old Mother Ireland, waiting for me
With a star in your soul and a song in your breast,
I shall come when the calm is abroad on the sea,
As a seeker of rest.
And when I am bound for you, Motherly One,

May the star and the song be the light and the
sound
That shall guide me between the green sea and
the sun
To a grave in your ground!

Old Foster Mother who blessed me at birth,
With the Faith and the Music still mine, as my
breath,
I shall come when the calm is abroad on the earth
As a dreamer of Death.
And when the poor dreamer at last is at rest,
May the Gift that he kept and the Gift he would
keep,
Be a Star for his soul and a Song for his breast,
When he rises from Sleep!

THE HAPPY THISTLES²

The downy thistles ride the breeze
O'er blossoms of the apple trees,
With the dusty dandelions gone
To overtake the *ceanaban*.

O Heart be still and never mind
The flossy forms that ride the wind,
For white they are, nor have they sinned,
And so their world is free as wind.

BEYOND RATHKELLY

As I went over the Far Hill,
Just beyond Rathkelly,
—Och, to be on the Far Hill
O'er Newtonstewart Town!
As I went over the Far Hill,
With Marget's daughter Nellie,
The night was up and the moon was out,
And a star was falling down.

As I went over the Far Hill,
Just beyond Rathkelly,
—Och, to be on the Far Hill
Above the Bridge o' Moyle!
As I went over the Far Hill,
With Marget's daughter Nellie,
I made a wish before the star
Had fallen in the Foyle.

As I went over the Far Hill,
Just beyond Rathkelly,
—Och, to be on the Far Hill
With the hopes that I had then!
As I went over the Far Hill,
I wished for little Nellie,
And if a star were falling now
I'd wish for her again.

THE CUCKOO

A Sound but from an Echo made,
And a Body wrought of colored Shade,
Have blent themselves into a bird,
But seldom seen, and scarcely heard.

THE WAR-PIPES

The Celt is feminine, being strong
In Love and Hatred, which his Song
Has nursed with lyrics, dewy-sweet,
And ballads, strong as bitter sleet.

The Celt is feminine, being much
In love with Nature, since a touch
Of the Irish wind first struck a spark
Of Music from the silent dark.

The Celt is feminine, for he
Would use the power of poetry
To make the Tyrant realize
That a Martyr's music never dies.

The dreamy Celt is feminine,
But when this Gaelic heart of mine
Hears hoofs and mustered music, then
The male in me is as nine men.

THE RIDERS

Between the womanly moon tonight
And the manly mountains, dwell
Such Fallen Ones as were of Light
But are not now of Hell.

Nor are They of the Human Kind,
Nor of the Beast are They;
The Fairy Folk who shall ride the wind
Until the Judgment Day.

DARBY THE RHYMER³

I lay it on the Holy Book,
That all the burning stars, that look
Their brightest in the whitest frost,
Are dull indeed, to what I lost.

For she whose eyes are brighter than
The planets that the Poets plan,
Has made her bargain fast and hard,
With Darby Fay the rambling bard.

If I could sing like Darby Fay
I'd break the bargain, faith, today,
For I would put in verses sweet,
The measured music of her feet:

And I would weave among the lines,
Her sunny tresses, like the vines

The holy monk in Mellery paints,
Among the psalms and pictured saints.

And having such a song, I'd leave
The trade of talk, and I would weave
My soul within the singing *rann*,
Until the Music seemed the Man.

But Darby Fay was born with skill
Of pen and tongue, while I am still
The man she left me—she the dame
Who took the heart and left the name.

And so upon the Book I lay
The truth concerning Darby Fay;
Whose shadow has been cast across
The starry eyes that light my loss.

BY CLODAGH'S STREAM⁴

I met a Fairy in the Dawn
As supple as a slender rush,
For she had her dancing slippers on
And she had the ankles of a thrush.

The pollen from her red lusmores
Had waxed a web of gossamer,
And all the music out of doors
Began to play a tune for her.

Each leaf was moving on its twig,
And twigs upon their branches shook,
While the Fairy stepped a Gaelic jig
I cannot find in any book.

And thrushes up among the oaks
Sang morning songs with such a grace,
That the earthly echoes seemed to coax
The sky-larks from their heavenly place.

O! gaily did the Fairy dance
On the web beneath the red lusmores,
Nor did she see the sun advance
To the music heard but out of doors.

So the cuckoo called the merry Elf,
And I awoke by Clodagh's stream;
Yet, if I had a dream itself,
I did not have a deaf man's dream.

THE FIELD OF THE FORT^s

I stood outside the *lios*,
By my dewy shadow dark
Sowing corn,
While Nature threw a kiss,
In the likeness of a lark,
To the Morn.

I stood outside the *rath*,
Longing for you as you passed

Through Dunmead ;
And as you walked the path,
There were scattered kisses cast
With the seed.

'Tis I'll be in Dunmead,
When the corn conceals the *lios*,
Cailin Deas ;
And since I've sown the seed,
Surely I shall reap a kiss
As you pass.

For 'tis I'll be near the fort,
When the kisses and the corn
Are ripe as noon ;
And the starry eyes I'll court,
Are the stars that shall adorn
The harvest moon.

FEAR

The maiden Fear whom men call base,
While passing stared me in the face ;
But her eyes were pure and chastely fair,
For the glance of God had entered there.

FRANCEY O'KANE⁶

The right hand of Death has been red since the
night

It dishonored old Dragish, by proving its might

On the clan of O'Cahan, which sings a refrain,
Lamenting the loss of young Francey O'Kane.

That he should be slain by a bloody right hand,
Is a fact that his people shall ne'er understand,
For the men of O'Cahan oft fell in their zeal,
Supporting the strong Scarlet Hand of O'Neill.

But let it be known to the men of the Creeve,
That Death masqueraded on that cruel eve,
In a sash of blue silk and with this for to fadge,
His raw second rib wore a bright Orange badge.

Nor did He come into the dwelling that night,
With the swift stilly wings of the carrion kite,
But rather with curses and blasphemies loud,
And a hatred of heart for O'Cahan the proud.

The youth was as mild as the saint of his name,
But no one was stronger when strength was the
game ;
Yet who can be milder than Death, when He likes,
And who can be stronger than Death, when He
strikes ?

For since Death went abroad in an Orange disguise,
The heart of Young Francey in old Dragish lies
'Neath Nature's own green, which She cannot sur-
pass,
For the Northern shamrocks are greener than grass.

Ochone! that the flowers should hide in the haw,
And the finch should know sorrow in sunny Ard-
straw!

For the birds in the bushes now sing a refrain,
Lamenting the loss of young Francey O'Kane.

BRIGID

(The Goddess of Poetry who lived of old above the
Gael in the glorious evening clouds.)

On a peak in Donegal I stood
With a wish that I could fly,
And the wind it blew the soul of me
To the edge of the evening sky.
"Ho, Ho, my heart, Och, heavy heart,
Ho, Ho, my heart!" said I.

And there among the colored clouds
A sky-lark met with me,
Where the wind had blown the soul of him
To the Muse of Poetry.
"Ho, Ho, my heart, Och, heavy heart,
Ho, Ho, my heart!" sang he.

For Brigid of the Arts was there,
—A mystic maiden young—
Whose soul was lifted by the winds
To strike the harp they strung.
"Ho, Ho, my heart, Och, heavy heart,
Ho, Ho, my heart!" she sung.

And there it was on lunar lyres
That I heard her Poets play,
For the wind had taken their willing souls
From the sorrows of their day.
“Ho, Ho, my heart! Och, heavy heart,
Ho, Ho, my heart!” sang they.

On a peak in Donegal I stood
And wondered being awake,
At the Wind, the Lark and the Gaelic Muse
And the music that they make.
“Ho, Ho, my heart, Och, heavy heart,
They sing but for your sake.”

THE SCRIBE

O Dreams, illuminating Dreams,
My soul is like that volume rare,
The Brook of Kells, with all its schemes
Of color, wrought by skillful care.

The shadowed Past in purple shines,
Limned not for any earthly wage,
And master-letters crown the lines
Gilt with the golden tint of age.

It is a tome in which You paint
The learned Flann of Monasterboice,
Tirconnell's chief and Derry's saint,
And Ceirnan of old Clonmacnoise.

The features of the chief are there
Who drove the Danes from Dublin's strand;
Strong Maeve of Connacht fierce and fair,
And the Monarch of the Wine-Red Hand.

And there are leaves in blue and green,
Which show a banner high above
Each sacred spot and battle scene,
Where Life was sacrificed to Love.

The setting sun in scarlet rage
O'er Tara's Hill is plainly drawn;
Yet I have but to turn a page
To see a picture of the Dawn.

For in this volume of my soul,
Are views of Erinneath the skies
From where the rising billows roll,
To where the rolling hillocks rise.

O Dreams, illuminating Dreams,
My soul is like the Book of Kells,
And You, as skillful Monks it seems,
Work in my heart's unworthy cells.

NATURE OFF IN ERINN

Hilly Isle in the mystery
Of a pagan Yesterday,
The Fairies of the mind of me

In Munterloony play ;
And as they dance beneath the haws,
On the stones of Craigatuke,
They can hear the cricket's small applause,
Re-echoed off in Crook.

Dewy Isle of the sacred hills,
That murmur echoes low,
Dumb dreams of mine sail down the rills,
Which creep through Aherlow ;
And as they pass, between the banks,
Meandering along,
They hear the thrushes giving thanks
To Nature in a song.

Holy Isle in a woeful sea,
That beats its breast in prayer,
The Angels of my Memory
Now flutter over there,
To Cavan of the foggy calm,
Where Tullygarvey's glen
Contains a robin's twilight psalm
And a corn-crake's deep "Amen."

THE LITTLE VISITORS

Paul and Rosaleen Marie,
Little children known to me
For but a busy moment, here
In this my unrecorded Sphere ;

I wondered much, and wondering,
All thoughts of toil at once took wing,
On meeting such a perfect pair
Of little angels unaware.

Rosaleen Marie and Paul,
If on me you should ever call
On that not impossible Autumn day
When I shall be unsound and grey,
I hope to see you as a pair
That have kept your promises; the fair
Two promises you made to me,
Of Beauteousness and Nobility.

O little boy of the Pauline brow,
O little girl, with the lily bough
Of Mary's bloom against your cheek,
You brought to me the dreams that seek
Such music, and such poetry,
As might describe the joy in me,
On meeting such a perfect pair
Of little angels unaware.

REJECTED WINGS

Upon their shoulders Angels wear
A hazel veil of wondrous hair,
To hide the plan
By which the Flesh was pinioned, ere
Our Adam fell from Eden fair
To earth—a wingless man.

THE STANDING STONES⁷

Here lie between the mountain sod
Of Ulster and the stars of God,
Three hundred clansmen of a race
Whose Red Right Hand once held the mace
Of the King of Ireland.

Their boulders tall have ceased to show
What clan of Gael lies here below ;
Yet the aged folk have handed down
Its name, but not, alas ! the Crown
Nor the Strength of Ireland.

O ye who pass this mountain way,
Who have the thought and time to pray,
See that the souls of these Irish here
Shall enter Heaven, with a cheer
For the Faith of Ireland !

THE METAMORPHOSIS

Such is my love I fain would sing
Far sweeter than your dearest bard,
But from my songless bosom spring
The flowers of this chapel-yard.

Such is my love I fain would tell
The rarest rhyme you ever heard,
But in the swallow I now dwell
A soul within a songless bird.

Such is the love that I have found!
O Land of whom I cannot sing,
May flowers ever grace this ground,
Caressed by yonder swallow's wing!

BLIND O'CAHAN

Rory Dall O'Cahan,
A harper of Tyrone,
Has gone to Alba of the Scots
To play before the throne.

"Rory Dall O'Cahan!"
Loud heralds now proclaim:
"The harper of the soothing hand
Whose fingers toy with fame."

"Rory Dall O'Cahan,
I would have you charm the Court,
With the music of your native land
So famous by report."

Rory Dall O'Cahan,
He played before the King,
And the music sounded like a breeze
Of laughter-loving Spring.

Rory Dall O'Cahan
Sang verses soft and kind,
And the music sounded like a breeze
From the World above the wind.

Rory Dall O'Cahan

Plucked at the woeful wires,
And the music sounded like a breeze
From troubled thorns and briers.

Rory Dall O'Cahan

Then struck a battle strain,
And the music sounded like a breeze
From the castle of O'Kane.

"Rory Dall O'Cahan,

Those blind eyes ill become
Your brilliant soul, and for the want
Of just praise I am dumb."

"Rory Dall O'Cahan,"

Said one of Scotland's Lords,
"His Grace, the King has praised you well,
With a royal choice of words."

Rory Dall O'Cahan,

Arose with ready tongue:
"A greater man than Scotland's King
Has praised the songs I've so sung."

"Rory Dall O'Cahan,

Pray who is he and where?"
"My dauntless chief," replied the bard,
"O'Neill of Ulster, Sire!"

Rory Dall O'Cahan
Has gone to Ireland,
But dumb and idle is his harp
And idle is his hand.

For Rory Dall O'Cahan
Has lost each finger nail,
And the jealous Scots who clipped them off
Might well conceal the tale.

WINE

Wine to the weak and to those unsound ;
Ale to the strong and able ;
But the Cup of Care must be passed around
To every one at the table.

THE UNWORLDLY LOVER

Impatient is the earthly lover.
But She, who is in love with Love,
Is patient as the stars above Her,
That shine neath brighter stars Above.

MARY'S ISLAND

(In Massapequa, L. I.)
A Dreamer of things,
That can only be found
Where the sound
Of the angels is heard by the lark,
Once came from a city

Too small for his dreams,
To an open land pretty
With rillets and streams
In Massapequa.

There by the shore
Of a sky-spotted lake,
Gulls shake
From their pinions the salt of the sea,
And there with emotion
I lingered, the while
These birds of the ocean
Flew over an isle
In Massapequa.

Above Mary's Isle,
They appeared to the bard
Like the guard
Of swift angels the larks often meet
Beyond Kerry's valleys
Or over Lough Erne;
But a lark never dallies
O'er meadow or burn
In Massapequa.

The waters were filled
With a sky's fallen blue,
And the view
Of that island was dreamily fair
To one who could wander

Away in a thought,
While he grew all the fonder
Of what his dreams brought
To Massapequa.

O! fair was that isle,
As it waited at noon
For the moon
With her island to mirror it's form;
But fairer than islands
In lake or in sky,
Were the heather-clad highlands
That seemed to be high
O'er Massapequa.

For a dreamer of things,
That can only be found
Where the sound
Of the angels is heard by the larks,
Still dreams; but the shadows
Of cities now blur
The mystical meadows
And things as they were
In Massapequa.

THE SEEKERS

These are the things that seek the light,
The moon, the sun-flower, and the soul,
Along the day and in the night,
And through the years no suns control.

THE VIRGIN'S SLUMBER SONG

Shoon-a-shoon,
I sing no psalm
Little Man,
Although I am
Out of David's
House and Clann.
Shoon-a-shoon
I sing no psalm.

(Hush-a-hoo,
Blowing of pine;
Hush-a-hoo,
Lowing of kine:
Hush-a-hoo,
Though even in sleep,
His ear can hear
The shamrock s creep.)

Moons and moons
And suns galore,
Match their gold
On Slumber's shore,
With Your glittering
Eyes that hold,
Moons and moons
And suns galore.

(Hush-a-hoo,
Oceans of earth;

Hush-a-hoo,
Motions of mirth:
Hush-a-hoo,
Though over all,
His ear can hear
The planets fall.)

O'er and o'er
And under all,
Every star
Is now a ball,
For Your little
Hands that are
O'er and o'er
And under all.

(Hush-a-hoo,
Whirring of wings;
Hush-a-hoo,
Stirring of strings:
Hush-a-hoo,
Though in slumber deep,
His ear can hear
My Song of Sleep.)

THE LITTLE HOUSE

Bathing birds beneath a spout
Of mountain water screened about,
With supple ferns and tufts of grass,
Are on the highway I would pass.

And little bows of colored foam,
Arching mountain streams that roam,
Beneath a bridge of stone and moss,
Are in the meadow I would cross.

But the little house where I would call,
Has a ruined roof and a tumbled wall;
Beyond that streamy meadow's grass,
On the road that I shall never pass.

KERRY'S KINGDOM

Majestic Nature wields Her wand
In Kerry's Kingdom;
For the mountains like great monarch^s stand
In Kerry's Kingdom:
And the Queen of Lakes rules all alone,
With isles like gems about Her zone,
While royal ferns surround Her throne
In Kerry's Kingdom.

Princely men are living there
In Kerry's Kingdom;
With every maid a princess fair
In Kerry's Kingdom:
But like the tale of royal Meath,
Her Chieftains now lie cold beneath,
The handsome purple of the heath
In Kerry's Kingdom.

Yet what of all the slavery
In Kerry's Kingdom!
And what of those who would be free
In Kerry's Kingdom!
And what of One, who once a slave
Returned to free a nation brave—
Och, surely Patrick, you can save
Old Kerry's Kingdom!

For you must know the faith of those
In Kerry's Kingdom;
Whose hope blooms like a monthly rose
In Kerry's Kingdom:
And surely you cannot forget
The love, to which you are in debt,
Of those who lie out in the wet
Of Kerry's Kingdom.

O the Queen of Nature rules the reeks
In Kerry's Kingdom;
For snow like ermine clothes the peaks
In Kerry's Kingdom:
But the King of All has larks that fly,
As messengers from Him on High,
To the living Gael and those who lie
In Kerry's Kingdom.

THE IRISH

With a gentle Hand
God made the Gael

For that fair land
Of Innisfail,
By angels planned.

A child is he
With an aged smile
Of mystery,
In the oldest isle
Of an ancient sea.

And He Who made
The Gael is kind
To the yew-tree's shade
And the dusty wind,
Where the old are laid

In that strange land
Of Innisfail,
By angels planned
For the childish Gael
Who holds God's Hand.

THE QUEST

Off to the Seven Eternities
My spirit bent her sail,
But a silent tide and a singing breeze
Won her the shores of the Gael.

Around the stormy Arran shore
She roamed to find her rest,

But a scarlet wind from the ocean bore
Her on to Hy Brasail the Blest.

Off in the Land of the Ever Young
She longs for the company
Of the vacant heart she left among
The wrack of an open sea :

And I would that the Seven Eternities
Were as near to the Gael today,
As the misty Isle and the many seas
That won my soul away.

THE OLD PRIEST

Weary not of ever-present Time,
That holds the Real Presence of God's Love,
But rather with the secret things sublime
Of Nature and the dustiness thereof ;

He would be going down the grassy ways,
In search of his Eternity as one,
Who is weary not of these light-laden days,
But rather of the high Symbolic Sun.

GLEANN-NA-SMOL

From the mountain of high Castlekelly,
I came by the Dodder's swift streams,
And there on the bank stood my Ellie
Like a fancy surrounded with dreams ;

She was singing a song I had written
To the music of Ireland's soul,
And from that very morn I've been smitten
By the echoes of sweet Glenasmole.

They have called it the Vale of the Thrushes,
Since Ossian first roamed o'er its green,
But still was each bird in the bushes
On the morning I met with Eileen ;
Whose voice seemed to me like the ringing
Of bells neath the deep Dodder's roll,
And for years I have heard but the singing
Of echoes in far Glenasmole.

Perhaps 'tis the words of my lover
Which call me to Dublin again,
Perchance 'tis the hills which above her
Cast note after note o'er the glen ;
But be it the songs of my making,
The singer or Ireland's soul,
I'll be off to the thing that is taking
Me over to far Glenasmole.

THE GAEL'S CONVERSION

He saluted the shaft-bearing Sun with his sword,
When the god of his fathers arose in the Morn,
But that day over Erin the Blood of his Lord
Was shed in the sun-set which stars now adorn.

THE BABY OF ST. BRIGID

Since first the beams of Summer lit
The world to gladden the Infinite,
No maiden walked in Erinn fair
Like good St. Brigid of green Kildare.

For there was more in the eyes of her
Than human light, and her tresses were
As the beams that dance on an Easter Morn,
When the Life of the World from Death is born.

Upon a day as Brigid prayed
In an ecstasy, a Babe was laid
On her open arms by Angels three,
Who stood to guard the mystery.

Now being wise in Faith she knew
The little Child to be the Jew
Whom Patrick called the Living God,
The Native-Born of every sod.

And being wise in Hope she kissed
The dimples in her Darling's fist,
And being wise in Love she sung
A lullaby in her ancient tongue.

Then the Angels guarding the mystery
Of a sleeping Babe on a maiden's knee,
Bent low to her in whispering joy:
"Hail! Foster-mother of Mary's Boy!"

“Since you have sung Him into sleep
We promise for to come and peep
Into the dreams of every child,
By Erinn’s slumber-songs beguiled.”

And even yet in Ireland,
The slumbering babe with dimpled hand
Would clutch the dreams where Angels peep,
Since Brigid sang her Babe to sleep.

ON ERIBEG ISLAND

Fair Maeve for whom I long in vain,
Had hair like golden rye;
Upon her cheeks was the berry’s stain,
And the color of her eye
Was between the blue of a robin’s egg,
And the deeper blue of the bay,
That bore me off from Eribeg
Where I would be today.

A thought of her is like a dream,
So sweet she was and bright,
And dreams of her to my spirit seem
Like visions lost in light.
Yet darker than a robin’s egg,
And lighter than the sea,
Was the blue of an eye in Eribeg
Where I shall never be.

O Maeve, of whom the skylarks sing
Each morning when they rise,
Was as graceful as the wild gull's wing;
And the color of her eyes
Was between the blue of a robin's egg,
And the deeper blue of the wave,
That bears my dreams to Eribeg
For the Slumber of her grave.

THE EMPTY GRAVE

I grieved above an empty grave,
Where lay a fresh wild-flower wreath,
To the memory of certain brave
Young hearts, which should have lain beneath
The turf of cold Glasnevin.

The plot was like a little field,
And the grass was guarded with a rail
Of iron pikes, on which a shield
Bore names immortal, and a tale
Well known around Glasnevin.

"Pray, how is this," a stranger cried;
"If I remember rightly, Sir,
These men were hung and though they died
For Ireland, they surely were
Not buried in Glasnevin."

"For they who die between the sod
And sky of Saxon prison-tow'rs,

Are cast in lime without a clod
To cover them, much less wild-flow'rs
From fields about Glasnevin."

And I beside the empty grave
But read aloud the obvious line:
"Here lie the patriotic brave
Young Allen, Larkin and O'Brien"
In National Glasnevin.

THE GAP OF DUNLOE²

When fragrant Angels brought the Spring
First to the Gap of wild Dunloe,
They wondered much that anything
From God in such a place should grow ;
For the hollow hills were built on caves,
Where hid the vixen with her fox,
And the bitter bogland's stony waves,
Arose to billows made of rocks.

The fragrant Angels rested far
Above the Gap of bleak Dunloe,
Which on the Isle seemed like a scar
Left by a Druid-devil's blow ;
Between the hills a gash sunk deep,
And weeds from many a brackish stream,
Lay o'er the land which seemed asleep,
Without a flower of which to dream.

So the fragrant Angels lit upon
A barren moor of black Dunloe,
To scatter forth the *ceanaban*
In marshes like a shower of snow ;
And ever since the place would seem
Like the wreckage of a world, mayhap
In fatal sleep but for the dream
Of flowers that cheers the slumbering Gap.

THE LILY

The lily seems about to faint
Away, just at the very hour
That brings it to a finished flower.
—And even so expires the saint.

BEFORE I STUMBLED

Before I stumbled o'er a song
In Waterford or Kerry,
The Winters were as long as long
But all the Springs were merry ;
For though I could not sing myself,
The sally-thrush was near me,
But now my rhymes might fill a shelf
And not a bird to cheer me.

Before I learned these music-words
In Ballyshunock's meadow,
The days were happy for the birds

Oft sang within my shadow ;
But now that I can sing a song,
My shadow wants the thrushes,
And the Winters are as long as long
With neither birds nor bushes.

How long ago since I was young
In Munster of the Music,
Is more than I could tell by tongue ;
But charming Moira Cusack,
Perchance recalls when first my words
Made songs on her so sweetly,
That all the jealous little birds
Went off from me completely.

THE IRISH MISSIONARIES

When the dreams of God and His slumber-smiles
Waxed to a world of stars and isles,
He chose a Star to announce His birth,
And an Isle to scatter the news on earth.

WORDS AND MUSIC

'Tis I who dreamed of Beauty, while
The place from which my dreamings came,
Was sought by me throughout an Isle
That bears an ancient Beauty's name.
So I must sing of Beauty—I,
Who seek from hill to hill, along
Fair Banba's land for dreams that fly
Like echoes of a cuckoo's song.

'Tis I who dream of Beauty—She,
Who surely lives within or on
The Irish hill, that yet shall be
The Tara of the coming Dawn.
So I must sing of Beauty. Lord,
That I may find the hillock soon
To which my poems, word by word,
Would march within a martial tune!

THE SWALLOW

With the night on his back,
And the day on his breast,
The swallow flew off
From his long summer's nest:

And he carried my Day,
And he carried my Night,
On his feathery form
With its black and its white,

To a country unknown;
But I know it lies, where
I have dreamed all my Time
Since he flew Over There.

IN CARRIGEEN

For Her, and Her only,
The leaves of October
Laid gold on their green;
But for Her, and Her lonely,

They now fall to robe Her
In cold Carrigeen.

For Her, and Her only,
The white-thorns bore flowers;
But now it would seem,
That for me, and me lonely,
They fall like snow-showers,
To dapple my dream.

For Her, and Her only,
The wild pigeons whistle
Their call and their cry;
But on Her and Her lonely,
The down of the thistle
Lies where it should lie.

For Her, and Her only,
I sang with the thrushes
She heard in Tyrone;
But from me, and me lonely,
The birds of the bushes
Have silently flown.

O Girl, lying lonely
In your mantle of shoddy,
You would be, I am sure,
At my hob had you only
The breath of your body,
Now as mist on the moor!

THE RED-HEARTED DAISY

Perchance a weeping Fairy's wings
Are freighted with this lyric, flying
To the green ground
Of Ireland;

Since this poor little poem brings
My sorrow for the robins, crying
O'er the green ground
Of Ireland:

For the Gaelic-hearted robin sings
O'er the Saxon-hearted daisy, dying
On the green ground
Of Ireland,

As he shall sing when the Poet's strings
Are laid away with an Alien, lying
In the green ground
Of Ireland.

BOG-FLOWERS²

The whiteness of the *ceanaban*
Lies in the marshy fog,
Like a form of frozen wind upon
The brown of a trembling bog.

And I would my spirit seemed as white
In the Mist of Memories,
As the *ceanaban* that lies to-night
Abroad like a frozen breeze.

THE LEAVE-TAKING

The swallows quickly chatter,
On the eaves,
Of a very weighty matter,
Kathaleen ;
For 'tis what I heard them say,
"We must soon fly off away
From the nests of yesterday—
And Kathaleen."

The robins in the bushes
Sing their song,
With more feeling than the thrushes,
Kathaleen ;
For their little rhymes relate,
To the swallows on the slate,
That have lingered rather late—
With Kathaleen.

Not only of the swallows
Do they sing,
For I leave your hills and hollows,
Kathaleen ;
With a music of my own
That may ever be unknown
To the robins of Tyrone—
And Kathaleen.

And though we now must sever,
Little girl,

Perchance it is forever,
Kathaleen;
I hope some day to learn,
How the swallows all return
To the valley of the Mourne—
And Kathaleen.

GLEANN MAGHAIR

On the woody banks of your winding stream
Glanmire, fair Glanmire!
The fairy dew from a poet's dream
Of Morning quenched the fire
Of my worldly heart that I might feel the Dawn.
And as I walked your banks along
Glanmire, fair Glanmire!
A fairy lark from a poet's song
Of Morning flew up higher
Than ever any Gaelic lark had gone.

DAYS REMOTE

Remote, they still are real,
Those days of childish art,
When the soul knew her ideal
Much better than her heart.
Afar, they still are present,
Those days of dreamy hours,
When the soul lived like a peasant
With unknown royal powers.

Remote they are, but ready,
Those days I seem to know,
To lead where once they led me
And I'm prepared to go.

TEARS I HAVE SHED

Tears I have shed o'er the dead and the dying,
Grief I have known when alone with my Art;
But only the God o'er the sod that was lying
Beneath us the day that we met for to part
Could know the deep sorrow, the soul-crushing sorrow,
That fell like a stone and made halves of my heart.

Smiles I have cast in the past on the merry,
Oft was I glad when a lad free from care;
But only the God o'er the sod where I bury
The seeds of my Fancy that oft blossom fair
Now knows the old feeling, the full happy feeling
I have when I meet you in dreams over there.

UNKNOWN

Were I a beggar of tales and rhymes,
Among the larks and talkative crows,
I would ask as an alms the "Tale of the Times
When the Wren was Wise" which nobody knows.

And were I a beggar of notes and tunes,
Among the Fairies I would speak a word,
To ask as alms the "Ancient Runes
Of the Mountainy Folk" which nobody heard.

But were I a beggar among a host
Of bards, I might forgo these things,
To ask for the song I liked the most
In my lullaby days—which nobody sings.

WATERFORD WISHES

Rather near the graveyard of Killbarry,
Would I be now a-listening to the thrushes,
Than making up a music that shall carry,
The echoes of my song to all the bushes
Of County Waterford.

Rather where the road of Newton crosses
To Ballydurn would I be now, a ranger,
Than dreaming here of all the many losses
My heart sustained, since I became a stranger
To County Waterford.

Rather in the street of Kilmacthomas,
Would I be now without a song or sonnet,
Than singing of my home-returning promise.
May the blessing of fulfilment fall upon it
In County Waterford!

MY NEIGHBOR

My neighbor of the Feathered Breast
Has built herself a grassy nest,
Within a cow-track—she who flies
O'er clouds into the cloudless skies.

But in the field or up above,
According to her laws of love,
The cow-track and the clouds are one
To the bird that praises Nature's sun.

O would my house and chapel were
As one to me, who neighbors her,
The lark, whose nest lies safely now
In the grassy field that I should plow.

THE SCOTSTOWN VISITOR^s

A withered old woman
Came up from Carnmore,
And the like of her never
Was seen here before,
For she wore a strange mantle
As green as the sea,
And we still do be thinking
She was of the *Sidhe*.

The withered old woman
Sat down at a style,

And a poor little cripple
Limped there with a smile;
"Good Morrow and Welcome
Old dame of the *Sidhe*!
I'm told the Good People
Cure cripples like me."

But the withered old woman
Had nothing to say,
To the poor little cripple
Who limps to this day,
And 'tis back to the mountain
She went hurriedly,
But we still do be thinking
She was of the *Sidhe*.

PERFECTION

Who seeks perfection in the art
Of driving well an ass and cart,
Or painting mountains in a mist,
Seeks God although an Atheist.

WE BOTH SET OUT

We both set out, my soul and I,
To Erinn's island, one to fly
Across the sea-birds' haunt, and one
To sail against the travelling sun.

But she who chose the nobler course,
Mistook the yellow stars for gorse;

And he who sailed the spheric stream,
Is drifting in a murmurous dream.

For we both set out, my soul and heart,
To fly and sail with each one's part
Of our great love, now argosies
Of Song among the stars and seas.

NEAR BALLYRENAN

The Summer rain comes with a sob
The while it falls on my father's hob,
Near Ballyrenan, in that Tyrone
Where many a hearth is a mossy stone.

And the Winter snow like Slumber drifts
Around a golden whin that lifts
The buds that ope and fall apart,
Like scattered dreams in Killydart.

But the Spring has neither loss nor gain
For the mountain side, where my father's grain
Was a yearly gift from God, and O!
That a Landed Lord could will it so!

THE BROWN LITTLE BEE

Brown little bee,
I remember a girl,
With a bowery dimple
For each ferny curl;

And her breath was as sweet
As the breeze in the air,
That blows down the street
From a new honey fair.

Brown little bee,
'Tis myself that grew weak,
For the want of the pollen
That bloomed on her cheek;
For the want of the wind
In her hair, and the want
Of the word she declined
Long ago for to grant.

O brown little bee,
You have put me in mind,
Of that flowery maiden
For whom I have pined,
In the dreams of hedged hours,
Where the blue eyes I knew,
Seem as empty as flowers
Long courted by you.

THE MASTER-SOUL

A master-soul, with a music sweeter
Than all the stars on Harmony's staff,
Is he who sings in Sorrow's metre,
Unknown to those who hear him laugh.

KEIMANEIGH

Through the lonely Pass of Keimaneigh
The feet of me once trod,
Where I feared the sound of lawless men
And horses strangely shod—
For the wraiths of robbers ride unseen
Along its stony sod.

But that was in my youthful time—
And should I return again,
I'd fear the Ghost of Nature more
Than the noise of ghostly men—
For as a wind She wanders through
That flower-forsaken glen.

O Keimaneigh of the hilly Pass,
As barren as a stone,
Where the wraith of Nature is a wind
Such as was never blown,
I would walk again your glen in dreams,
But I dare not go alone.

DUBLIN IN THE DARK

In the strange night
Of a city vast,
Now sinks the light
Of a glorious past,
Reflected dimly, dimly in the moon;

But the heart of one
Gone down in dreams,
Would prefer the sun
To these borrowed beams
Reflected dimly, dimly in the moon.

MAUREEN OGE

O Maureen Oge across the foam,
If you were at these hedges here,
You would not know that you were home
So quaint is everything and queer.

Each primrose opens with the day
To wonder why it has unfurled,
And since you wandered far away
The winds have searched the open world.

The cuckoo calls you home again;
The daisies droop in pale distress;
And roses lean across the lane,
Och! roses wild with loneliness.

O Maureen Oge beyond the sea,
I wait not only with the rose;
For in the house where you should be,
The walls are lonesome for your clothes.

IN EARTH OR SEA

With the worms of the earth,
Or the fish of the sea,

'Tis I shall hear the smallest note of mirth
From a merry Laughter's broken melody.

With the rocks in the ground,
Or the reefs in the deep,
'Tis I shall hear the smallest happy sound
As an echo in the dreams of one asleep.

THE WINDS

The Wind of the South
With mouth wet and mild
Is good in Her deeds
To the seeds growing wild.

The Wind of the North
Goes forth for to sweep
O'er birds newly born
And shorn huddled sheep.

The Wind of the West
At rest on the lea
Fills fisher-men's nets
With the pets of the sea.

But the Eastern Wind
Made blind by the rains
Comes tapping his stick
On the thick window-panes.

THESE WHIMS

These whims are dreary
Afar from the golden oats,
And these rhymes are weary
Afar from the linnet's notes.

These songs are lonely
Afar from the thrushes lane,
And these words are only
A wish to be back again.

STAR-SHADOWS

Star-shadows broken into shards
Fall on the little children's Bards,
Who sing Simplicity's refrain
To the patter of the playful rain.

But the Poet of the Elder Folk
Is shadowed by the dewy oak;
Nor can he sing until he hears
The drip of breeze-begotten tears.

Yet I am neither bard unto
The Young or Old; for winds ne'er blew,
Nor rain has fallen for the scribe,
Who sings among the Shadow Tribe.

BEFORE THE SUMMER

The bashful primrose hides away
Among the hours of fading May,

And the restless cuckoo drops his tune
Among the seven last days of June.

For the roaming cuckoo fondly strays
Among the hours of thirty days,
To call the primrose back from sleep
With dreamy echoes of music deep.

And like an echo is the voice
That calls the maiden of my heart's choice,
From the faded flowers of a distant May
For the cuckoo calls in my dreams to-day.

THE WANDERER

I know the continuity of change
Shall win me that fair Ireland I range
But as a Wraith—a onetime traveller's
Sun-weary shadow, lost while seeking hers.

O Breath of Life you blow from out my heart
The song that plays a wandering Spirit's part;
But the Breeze of Death shall waft that Dream
among
The hills of Ireland lost when I was young.

For the rolling years again shall come around
With rest for me whose Shadow, having found
The Spirit of my Ireland, shall range
Beyond the continuity of change.

THE NUN

Knowing well the blossomed power
Of Nature in this artful world,
She folded up her soul, a flower,
Which Angels long to see unfurled
Among the lilies now in Heaven;
The lilies nourished in a sod,
That needs nor sun nor dewy leaven
In the weeded garden of their God.

O may we all who shared her labors
Of daily work and dreary tasks,
Be all together, all as neighbors
In that other world! And the poet asks,
That the little Nun may grant him pardon
For singing such a weedy song,
About that fair and future Garden
Where flowers such as she belong.

THE CROW'S NEST⁹

Do I mind the soft welcome of those
Whom I left in Raphoe with regret?
Och! the twigs in the nest of the crows
Shall blossom before I forget.

The old woman down in her shop,
Who was old when I first toddled in
To buy me a two-penny top,
And a scurge for to help it to spin.

The dusty wee man breaking stones
On the side of the road where he wrought,
When I still had the youth in my bones,
And a bagful of dreams for each thought.

The tinker, as old as the old,
The beggar, the *siubhloir* and all
Who must travel for want of the gold
That keeps me from kind Donegal.

Do I mind the soft welcome of those
Whom I left in Raphoe with regret?
Och! the twigs in the nest of the crows
Shall blossom before I forget.

THE TWILIGHT

To the Arab the Mother of Time is the Moon,
And Time to the Persian begins at high noon;
But the Twilight to me is the Mother of Time,
With her lullabies set to the Gael's robin-rhyme.

CONNAMARA

What are the monthly moons to one
Who scarcely sees the city's sun,
That comes from out the distant dark
Where sings a late sky-sheltered lark
O'er a girl in Connamara?

What are the useless stars to me
Who never heard their melody,
Nor saw them here, unless it were
As reflected light from the eyes of her
Who sings in Connamara?

O what is this new world, without
The privilege sweet of being in doubt
As to whether I am in her thought,
Or in the dreams that came to naught
Away in Connamara!

SWAN-SONGS

The Oriental cuckoo cries
His dirges of the double note,
From out a bloody throat
And dies.

The Celtic swan begins a lay,
A slumber-lyric, which eftsoons
Grows sadly silent and she swoons
Away.

And I about to part with breath,
Would so allay the agony,
By singing in an ecstasy
Of Death.

THE THREE SONGS

I smit my bitter foe with verses
Of satire sharp,
But the echoes carried back their curses
And struck my harp.

I sang to skies in the master-metres
Of noble Rome,
Yet the echoes only gained St. Peter's
Acoustic dome.

But the song I lent a sky-lark yearning
To sing for me,
Now comes to Memory and returning
Brings Poetry.

THE DEAD NUN

Sister Lucy all in white,
Silent as a snowy night,
Lies upon her bier as though
She were a form of drifted snow.

Sister Lucy for a while
Lived among us, with the smile
That glistens yet like ice, upon
The face from which its warmth has gone.

Sister Lucy lying here,
White as Winter on your bier ;
Had you gone my way with me,
No colder could my heart now be !

WHEN YOUTH WAS

To you my heart I gave, Boy,
When curls were on the leaf,
But my breast is now a grave, Boy,
Of wonderment and grief.
For you promised me the ring, Boy,
While leaves were all in curls,
But you quickly felt the Spring, Boy,
Neath the beams of other girls.

I gave my lasting love, Boy,
With truth upon my tongue,
When the lark was late above, Boy,
And forget-me-nots were young.
And 'twas to me you told, Boy,
What leaves me now bereft,
For the harvest moon is old, Boy,
And the birds have loved and left.

ITA

Death came
As snowy flakes,
To the Flame

Of one
Pure little soul
Who has won

The Breath,
That fed the Flame
To baffle Death;

The God,
Whose tears are snow
On her sod.

FAIRY PARK

O'er Fairy Park
On an Ulster hill,
A native lark
Is singing still ;
And he can see,
From where he flies,
A ship at sea
'Neath twilight skies.

In Fairy Park
On an Ulster height,
My love, the lark,
Shall dream to-night
Of a ship at sea,
By the sun-set crowned ;
And perchance of me
Now outward bound.

O'er Fairy Park
Where sky-larks sail,
The lonely lark
Some day shall hail
The soul of me,
Returning by
Her shipless sea,
The Irish sky.

TRUTH AND LOVE

While Ghostly God's persistent Grace
Scorns the vicissitudes of place,
Truth and Love shall remain sublime
Among the lowly things of Time.

THE SILENT CLOCK

Three women came over from Monasterboice
To kneel with the Soggarth and answer his voice,
For pale on the poster their grandfather lay
And two candles were burning though bright was
the day.

A shutterless window framed acres of land,
But a six-penny cross was the wealth in his hand;
And he held it as though 'twere the shaft of a plow
That stiffens the muscles and softens the brow.

With the weight of its wood slipping out of his
grasp,
The breath of the dying soon grew to a gasp;
And the six-penny cross, which an angel might
wear,
Decked his breast—and thus ended a common
affair.

As I passed through the chamber an old-fashioned
clock
Stood weary and worn, for its tick and its tock
Had measured his labor and tallied his breath,
From the hour of birth to the hour of death.

But an old Gaelic woman went up to its side
And set the black hands to the minute he died :
And I, but a youth from a gay foreign clime,
First knew what it meant for to pass beyond
Time.

SLEEP

Sleep falls like snow-flakes, and it seems
'Tis always drifting into dreams ;
But Death falls like the snow at sea,
And drifts into Eternity.

THE HOLY THREE

O saintly Patrick of the Irish People,
From out the shadow of a chapel steeple
May I come forth at the Resurrection,
To gain the power of your protection!

Mystic Mary of the Gaelic Nation,
My soul shall trust in that appellation ;
For surely, Brigid, the day of trial
Shall hear no Foster-Mother's denial!

Columkille of the many churches,
When your Derry's angels have left their perches,
May you help me in my soul's endeavor
To be exiled from this world forever!

O Holy Saints, your symbol surely
Is the leafy shamrock, set securely
On Irish graves for their protection,
When God comes forth at the Resurrection.

ALCHEMY

Because of the light of the moon,
Silver is found on the moor;
And because of the light of the sun,
There is gold on the walls of the poor.

Because of the light of the stars,
Planets are found in the stream;
And because of the light of your eyes,
There is love in the depths of my dream.

BALLAD OF THE MOTHER'S REVENGE¹⁰

Rich were the lands of Inch Castle,
Where Ulick Mac Kelly was Lord,
O'er the bog and the lawn,
Of Ballykilbawn,
Which he held by the strength of his sword.

And Oony O'Moore had a cabin,
In the shadow of dark Castle Inch,
Where cages were hung,
From which gold-finches sung,
To the free little robin and finch.

But Oony O'Moore had a daughter,
In the shade of Mac Kelly's black soul,
Where Hell's scarlet light,
Gave the power of sight,
To a demon that naught could control.

Now the Plague struck the flesh of Mac Kelly,
So they left him alive and alone,
In the heart of the bogs,
Where not even the dogs,
Would have gone for a man's rotten bone.

They carried him out to the marshes,
And left him alone and alive,
In a shed on the moor,
With a death to endure,
For they knew that he could not survive.

Next morning the shadow of Oony,
Went out with herself on the bog,
To a man whom she cursed,
Till he tried in his thirst,
For to drink the damp mist of the fog.

And the people in fear of the Fever
Stood dumb with a terror untold;
For the curses they heard,
Called each carrion bird,
To the flesh of a man growing cold.

Sitting in front of the sheiling

It was Oony O'Moore whom they saw,
And her blasphemous voice
Bid the mag-pie rejoice,
And the raven to sharpen his claw.

By the sheiling of Ulick Mac Kelly,

Three paces away from his breath,
She sat at the door,
Shouting curses galore,
While he waited the blessing of Death.

And the rooks of the parish next morning,

Went out with the ravens and crows,
And they flew to the side,
Of the man who had died,
Near a woman who never arose.

For Oony O'Moore's only daughter,

Was slain in the house of the chief,
Who died by the side,
Of the mother who died,
To revenge the great cause of her grief.

Now even the name of the valley,

Has been changed in the County Kildare;
But the old castle stands,
On Mac Kelly's rich lands,
And the rooks of the parish are there.

And Oony O'Moore of the Curses,
Walks still in her shadowy shawl,
Near Ballycolane,
Where she cries not in vain,
For the ravens still come at her call.

PASSING THE CHAPEL

O Chief of Adam's Clan
Upon the earth and over,
My head I now uncover,
O Chief of Adam's Clan.

O Chieftain crowned by me,
A deed of shameful credit,
I pass you now bareheaded,
O Chieftain crowned by me.

O Chief upon Your Throne
Beneath this chapel's steeple,
May you crown all Patrick's People,
O Chief upon Your Throne.

THE TWO FIRES

A song once fell from Heaven above,
"Forever burns my soul with Love";
And up from Hell there came a shout,
"Neither shall this my soul burn out."

BALLAD OF DOUGLAS BRIDGE

On Douglas Bridge I met a man
Who lived adjacent to Strabane,
Before the English hung him high
For riding with O'Hanlon.

The eyes of him were just as fresh
As when they burned within the flesh ;
And his boot-legs widely walked apart
From riding with O'Hanlon.

"God save you, Sir !" I said with fear,
"You seem to be a stranger here."
"Not I," said he, "nor any man
Who rides with Count O'Hanlon."

"I know each glen from North Tyrone
To Monaghan, and I've been known
By every clan and parish, since
I rode with Count O'Hanlon."

"Before that time," said he to me,
"My fathers owned the land you see ;
But they are now among the moors
Ariding with O'Hanlon."

"Before that time," said he with pride,
"My fathers rode where now they ride
As Rapperees, before the time
Of Trouble and O'Hanlon."

“Good night to you, and God be with
The Tellers of the tale and myth,
For they are of the spirit-stuff
That rides with Count O’Hanlon.”

“Good night to you,” said I, “and God
Be with the chargers, fairy-shod,
That bear the Ulster heroes forth
To ride with Count O’Hanlon.”

On Douglas Bridge we parted, but
The Gap o’ Dreams is never shut,
To one whose saddled soul to-night
Rides out with Count O’Hanlon.

THAT STARRY THING

That starry thing a-singing now
Above the mountain-ash’s bough,
Is but a bird, yet he who hears
Her song, has Heaven at his ears.

O! that my future Paradise
May be as near the Irish skies
As the bird is to the clouds—as near
As her wingèd song is to mine ear!

THE HUSBANDMAN

With a scythe and a song I reaped the field,
Where lies the stubble that yet shall yield
To the scythe and song of Winter’s blast:
And thus may Death reap me at last.

MAC SWEENEY THE RHYMER

Hughie Mac Sweeney, a thatcher by trade,
Now slumbers unknown in his clay cabin made
By a song-singing gravedigger, deep in the shade,
Of the Phoenix near Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney, by Nature and Art,
Was cursed with the gift that has withered the
heart
Of song-stricken Gaels, whom the Saxon would
part
From the Phoenix of Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney, a writer of songs,
Was filled with the knowledge of Ireland's wrongs,
And his ballads were brave, yet the credit belongs
To the Phoenix of Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney one night long ago,
Went up to the waters that sing as they flow
From Tubberneill's fountain, when suddenly, lo!
The Phoenix on Bessy Bell Mountain!

Hughie Mac Sweeney that night near the well,
Saw bright Orange flags on the ramparts of Hell,
By the light of the fiery feathers that fell,
From the Phoenix on Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney saw Baronscourt's parks,
In a vision lit up by those feathery sparks,
And that Hope he beheld is now sung by the larks,
O'er the Phoenix of Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney heard tales of the years,
When the Gael would come back from his troubles
and tears,
To the meadows he left with a patriot's fears,
For the Phoenix of Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney that night with a moan,
Heard the sorrowful tale of his shadowed Tyrone,
And 'tis he had a grievous tale of his own,
For the Phoenix on Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney came down at the dawn,
And 'tis strange that his bones were not quartered
and drawn,
For the story he told, and the song he made on
The bold Phoenix of Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney lived long in Ardstraw,
And long did he sing of the vision he saw—
The sun-beams of Liberty, now in the claw
Of the Phoenix on Bessy Bell Mountain.

Hughie Mac Sweeney, a thatcher and bard,
Now slumbers unknown in Ardstraw's chapel-yard,
But his soul was brought up to its shining reward,
By the Phoenix from Bessy Bell Mountain.

THE BUILDERS

Behold! He has made thee small and poor of
feather;

Yet thou wouldst build thy nest among the stars,

Ambitious Lark, that flieth from the heather
To Heaven's bars.

Behold! He has made thee as His Likeness,
Brother;

Yet thou wouldst build thy heaven even here,
Ambitious Man, who hast a will to smother
Thy sense of fear.

THE PUBBLE GHOST

The ghost of a troubled woman
Arose from her body's tomb,
And she came one morn
With her babe unborn
To the door of our cabin room.

And the hand of the ghostly woman
Knocked loud with its knuckled bone,
Until she was told
To come in—for we hold
That no beggar should want in Tyrone.

"God prosper the work"! said the woman,
"The workers, the churn and the staff,
For it is what I think
I had little to drink
Since your wee moiley cow was a calf."

"The blessing of God on you, woman!
There is plenty of drink in the churn,

And since you are a guest
We shall give you the best
Ever milked on the banks of the Mourne."

But the noggin of milk that was offered
To the woman remained on the shelf,
For she seemed in a trance
When I by a chance
Began to sing low to myself.

For I was a music-maker,
A singer of song and rhyme,
And I tried them in turn
Each week at the churn
While the plunge of the dasher kept time.

Now the woman who came as a beggar
Repeated the song, and soon
She went with her care
Back to Pubble Yard where
The Dead have heard her croon.

For the ghost of a troubled woman
Once walked through Dernalabe, .
With my lullaby song
In her mouth which long
She has sung to an unborn babe.

THE CELT

He enters Europe from the East,
Where yet the monstrous bones of beast

And reptile lie, as when they lay
Upon the fortieth deluged day.

His rounded head wears plaited locks,
All dyed the color of the fox;
And his eyes are blue, as blue and fierce
As the scorching skies they long to pierce.

Strong of form, his arms are large
Enough to bear a heavy targe;
A stony weapon, and a long
Straight brazen spear once blest with song,

That it might only sing of Death,
On its way to anything with breath.
He enters Europe huge of limb,
And each young muscle moves on him,

As though 'twere dancing to the beat
Of his musical heart; and at his feet
Goes watchfully a wolfish dog.
He enters Europe in a fog.

BALLAD OF MARGET

'Tween Collen Town and Oriel
On a road in County Louth,
There lives a girl as sweet as though
The bees had made her mouth.

And many a man still has the heart
He hopes that she may choose,
Since Francey from Rathdonnell's fields
Lost all he had to lose.

One night while the bitter winds blew up
And the snows were blowing down,
Young Francey took the top of the road
To the edge of Collen Town.

"God bless all here"! said the shivering lad
As he entered Marget's door,
"'Tis a terrible night, and ye might say that
And still say something more."

"God bless ye kindly," she replied,
"Faith, cold it is but why,
Should the heart of a youth be cold at all
Though the snows are drifting high?"

Young Francey sat before the grate,
And he then began to blow,
The purple palms of his freezing hands
And his fingers stiff with snow.

"Now why do you blow your hands so red,
Your fingers and each thumb?"
"That my breath may warm them well," said he,
"For cold they are and numb."

"If that be so," then Marget cried,
"Let ye take this bowl of broth;"
And she placed it on the roses red
That bloomed in the table-cloth.

Young Francey at the table sat,
And he blew his breath with vim,
On the bowl of broth 'till waves arose
And dashed against the brim.

"Now why do you blow the steaming bowl,
And you just in from the storm?"
"That my breath may cool it well," said he,
"For it is as warm as warm."

"Since you have blown to make things hot
And then to make things cool,
'Tis plain ye are but a fickle lad
If not an inconstant fool!"

And saying so, young Marget soon
Was the loneliest girl in Louth,
Where long indeed she looked as though
A bee had stung her mouth.

And now she sits by a lonely grate
To sup her lonely broth,
But the roses red, Och! the roses red
Still bloom in the table-cloth.

BEAUTY

Ere Light and Shade, or Land and Sea,
Were cast in the Now of Eternity;
Or the hosts of Angels through Heaven trod,
Beauty was made from a Rib of God.

THE GREEN ROAD¹¹

I roamed the mountain when a child,
And knew each place and every part,
From Legacurry's pigeons wild
To the linnets green of Killydart;
But now it is a faded chart
Upon a page of Memory,
Without a thrush to cheer my heart,
Or dove to coo its love to me.

But on the Mount of Bessy Bell,
I know the burns are running still
In Legacurry's hilly dell,
And Killydart behind the hill;
For through a broken window-sill
Among the walls of ruined homes,
'Tis I can see a mountain rill
That rambles where my spirit roams.

And through Rathkelly's broken Arch,
I still can see swift ripples turn,
And through the limbs of mountain larch

Mine eyes behold Pulrory Burn ;
Whose roaring waters wildly churn
The foam into a floating mist,
That rises to the mountain's cairn
Where Donnell Gorm sleeps in the cist.

Sweet are the fields where flowers grow,
As once they grew upon the flax
In Legacurry, where I go
Through dreams to build the turf in stacks ;
But Killydart all pleasure lacks
To one who in those dreams can hear,
The music of proud royal packs
Of hounds that chase the foreign deer.

In Legacurry I can trace
The causes of my early cares,
But Killydart is now a place
Of tangled haunts for timid hares ;
And all along the stream that shares
Its broken music with my lay,
Still grow the trees that were the tares
Which choked the grain of Yesterday.

In Baronscourt the fields are green ;
But greener far than meadows fair,
Is the little road that lies between
The woods and wreckage over there ;
For over there, Och ! over there,
A little road in grass is clad,

Which only Baronscourt should wear
Or Lurgybeg or Aghafad.

So I've roamed the mountain since a child,
From Legacurry of the sloes
Across the summit worn and wild,
To the ruins shadowed by the crows;
Along the glen my spirit goes,
And though her home should be my heart,
This soul of mine no comfort knows
Outside the walls of Killydart.

BALLAD OF TWO COUNTIES

*O reader of this Irish rhyme
Let you give thanks to God,
That the two and thirty counties now
Are as a single sod.*

Along a road in Antrim's Glens,
A Monk and a Friar came;
And one had eyes filled up with sparks
And one had eyes of flame.

The Monk he was a man of peace
But his hand once knew the hilt;
And the Friar had a peaceful soul
But his heart of bone was built.

Along the road in Antrim's Glens,
They met upon a day;

While the sky-larks tuned their merry, merry notes
To the loud burns on the brae.

“Now God be with you,” said the Monk,
“I come from brothers leal;
'Tis what I say I come to beg
For the body of Shane O'Neill.”

“Strange is the soil in which he lies,
And with us it is a law,
That the chief who dies, with his ancestors,
Should lie down in Armagh.”

Then full of voice the Friar spoke;
“Have you brought from your fens,
The dust of James Mac Donnell, Lord
Of Cantire and the Glenns?”

“Strange is the soil in which he lies,
And with us it is a law,
That the chieftain gone to his ancestors
Should lie not in Armagh.”

“Now,” quoth the Monk, “it is a truth,
I did not what you say;”
While the black-birds tuned their sorry, sorry notes
With the loud burns on the brae.

“Then,” said the Friar, “know ye that
Whilst surly foemen tread

On James, the Lord of Antrim's Glens,
And Chief of Cantire's dead;

Know ye, I say, that in Glenarm
Where hard is every heel;
Our brothers bare of foot shall tread
On the dust of your great O'Neill."

*O reader of this Irish rhyme,
Let you give thanks to God,
That the two and thirty counties now
Are as a single sod.*

THE DRUMS

While the restless heart of a shackled man
Beats on his hollow soul,
Discordant drums shall be sweeter than
The royal organ's roll.

FATHER HEARN

Father Hearn of Kilmigemogue
Lies now beneath the threshold stones
Of his chapel porch, where boot and brogue
Must walk across his humble bones
While going through the church's door,
To Christ whose Body humbly lies
Neath the Tabernacle's tomb-stone, o'er
Which Angels walk in meek surprise.

But Father Hearn, by Heaven's Grace,
Shall the higher sit at Heaven's Board,
Because he chose the lowliest place
In which to wait for Heaven's Lord.
For such is sweet Humility,
That sacred Virtue still so dear
To the ever-present Christ, that He
Waits for the lowly with them here.

NOT ALWAYS

Not always would I go along
With constant features looking up;
For some discovered butter-cup
Might prove the subject for a song:

A song of Life and Grief and Love,
Set to the sorrow of the grass
For those in towering towns, who pass
With constant features turned above.

NEWTOWN'S GRAVES

Stars like sparks
From the smouldering day,
Ghosts of larks
In a glimmering sky,
And nearer still,
The gold and grey
Of a lunar hill,
That echoes the cry

Of corn-crakes, deep
In the fields away
From Those who Sleep
And Dream of Day.

THE RINGASKIDDY CHILD

When I have set
My thoughts to sing
Of a child I met
On the road to Ring,
My heart and rhyme
Would slowly beat
To keep in time
With her tiny feet.

But the child has long
Been low in Cork;
And my heart and song
Here in New York,
Can only beat
In harmony
With the pattering feet
Of a Memory.

NEST AND HIVE

The Hive Bee lives in his cabin round,
For less than a year; but in the ground
Of a flowery ditch, the Humble Bee
Lives like a lord, for he is free.

The Hive Bee gathers his goods for Man ;
But the Humble Bee since Trade began
Has hoarded honey, and still shall hoard
His liquid treasures for Nature's Lord.

Had I the wealth of a wood or farm,
I'd keep the Hive Bees all from harm ;
But as it is with their apiary,
So is it with my house and me.

A FAIRY SINGS

The crooning wind has a troubled song
For the little breeze that creeps along
This rippled lake, wherein tonight
The stars as dreams shall give their light.

But I shall come this evening with
My story, legend, song and myth,
To the motherly wind whose little breeze
Shall slumber to the harmonies,

That sang the Bards of old asleep
Beside this purple lake, as deep
As the purple depths from which the bright
Fair stars shall come as dreams tonight.

THE TOTAL DAY

A sky-lark sings a lyric loud
Upon a cloud in skies remote,
And from the fingers of the breezes,
My spirit seizes every note.

A black-bird sings upon a perch
Of silvery birch, with beak of gold,
And through the briers of a thistle,
The breezes whistle echoes bold.

A robin sings a doubtful song,
While clouds prolong uncertain light,
And winds that bear the robin's sorrow,
Seek for Tomorrow through the night.

THE MASTERS

My eyes have pierced the mystic blue
Of distances, within the eyes
Of dream-victorious Dante, who
Saw earthly things in Paradise;

And I have heard the harmony
Of words that rhymed themselves along
The course of Shakespeare's life, while he
Sang of the sky-lark with her song.

But O that I were deaf and dark
To the world, as are those other two,
Beethoven, awed by Heaven's lark,
And Milton, mazed by Heaven's view!

THE DOMES

To illuminate a hymn I wrought,
On an orderly Thomistic thought
In holy volumes, but 'twould seem
I labored on a useless dream.

For in those vast cathedral-tomes,
The thoughts to me were massive domes,
On which Aquinas, as a saint
Sketched what my dreams have failed to paint.

UNHINDERED

Intended for that Brilliant Place
From which the Light
Comes darkling as a lance of Grace
To pierce the Night,
The soul awaits the coming shaft
Of Death, delayed
Not by the jealous Power Who laughed
When Man was made.

WITHERING

Flower, without
A voice to sing,
We are about
—My soul and I—

To make a song
For robins to sing,
When the bee ere long
Shall pass you by.

THE GREY GHOST

From year to year there walks a Ghost in grey,
Through misty Connamara in the West;

And those who seek the cause of His unrest,
Need go not to the Death-Dumb in the clay,
To those who fell defiant in the fray,
Among the boggy wilds of Ireland, blest
By Cromwell, when his Puritanic jest
Left Hell and Connaught open on their way.

As I have heard, so may the stranger hear !
That he who drove the natives from the lawn,
Must wander o'er the marsh and foggy fen,
Until the Irish gather with a cheer
In Dublin of the Parliaments at Dawn.
God rest the ghost of Cromwell's dust, Amen !

IN CAPPAGH PARISH

The sheen of salmon in the Strule ;
A living lyre overhead ;
A rhymmer of Tradition's school,
And silence down among the Dead.

'Tis but a study of the spot
Through which I often roam in sleep ;
A stilly place where Gael and Scot
Bewail the silence they must keep,

When the river runs with salmon trout,
And larks go forth to sing of life,
And I go down in dreams to shout
The manly songs of ancient strife.

THE POETICAL SAINTS

The Gaelic Bards to Nature seem
As goodly saints, who sing to God,
That all the prayers which they may dream
My bless Her favorite sod.

Yet the Irish Saints to Her appeared
As pious bards, who gave renown
To Heaven's Son, whom Nature reared,
To wear Her leafless crown.

O PART OF ME

O Part of me imparadised,
O Heart of me
In yonder singing lark disguised!

You have left a part of me alone—
That part of me
Which shall flutter higher than you have flown.

STAR-SHEEN

Were you the Brook,
And I the Beam,
The stars above
Might well disperse;
But were you the Book
And I the Dream,
The stars, my Love,
Would stud the Verse.

BALLAD OF FRIENDSHIP

Among the men of the Gaelic tongue
A proverb can be found;
"The mercy of God oft lies between
The saddle and the ground."

And among the tales as yet unsung
By Sassanach or Gael,
Is one that proves the proverb is
As truthful as the tale.

Near Ballyboe in Ireland
Two men together met,
And for many a day and many a day
Each was the other's pet.

At every fair they both were seen
And together they would be,
And in each man's house they both enjoyed
True hospitality.

And at every market they were seen
And they met at every Mass,
'Till the older man of the friendly pair
Lay under lonely grass.

A stilly night it surely was
And a night as clear as noon,
When Cormac rode on his wan-white mare
'Neath the beams of a wan-white moon.

Along the road from Ballyboe
Old Cormac rode his mare,
Until he felt the mane at his hand
Grow stiff as a dead man's hair.

"Now Kate, my girl, be at your ease ;
Now Kate, my girl, be still ;"
But the young mare strove at the level road
As though 'twere a rocky hill.

And as she trembled timidly
The filly struggled hard,
'Till flecked with foam she leaped away
O'er the road to the chapel yard.

Nine ticks o' his watch from the chapel gate,
With the rider all was well ;
Eight ticks o' the watch from the chapel gate,
The man from his wild mare fell.

"Och ! Kate, my girl, be at your ease,
Och ! Kate, my girl, be calm,
For my foot is caught in the stirrup-strap
And no reins are in my palm."

Now as the filly reached the gate
That leads to Death's abode,
She stopped as suddenly as though
Death in the saddle rode.

And as Cormac lay at the chapel wall,
'Twas but a matter of course,
That he should see his Faithful Friend
At the bridle of the horse.

So pulling out his clasping knife
The strap was severed soon,
And off he rode on his wan-white mare
'Neath the beams of a wan-white moon.

"Now Kate, my girl, be at your ease,
Sure Kate, 'twas only Jim,
And ye might have known my old comrade
For I often rode with him."

"'Twas he who had the flowing heart,
For Love was at its source,
And the friend in Life was still the friend
In Death as a matter of course."

"And though he rides the winds to-night,
God's mercy surely lies,
Between the grass of Ballyboe
And the gates of Paradise,

As it lay between the stony ground,
That holds the dust of Jim,
And the saddle-seat in which I ride
Away from the soul of him."

And saying so he prayed a prayer,
That was granted as a boon,
For he sleeps tonight beside his friend
'Neath the beams of a wan-white moon.

THE SOLAR ROAD

From the start of Life
To the end of Its strife
There is many a weary league,
But the Road that runs
Among the Suns
Shall cause us no fatigue.

IN DREAMY VALLEYS

In dreamy valleys odorous and vast
Surrounded by the mountain's sunny sides;
In fields where tossing grasses have their tides,
Ere the ebbing and the flowing winds have passed
To a Winter, bitter only 'tween the blast
Of Stephen's Day and that of good St. Bride's,
The soul of me contented now abides,
Whereto her alien heart shall roam at last.

Nor all the seas between me and my soul,
Nor all the clouds now flying where they flew
When first my broken being knew divorce,
Shall keep me from the star-surrounded goal
Of Ireland, when dreams have led me through
The life that I am living here by force.

THE YEW TREE

From out the yew-tree's aged green,
A bluish vapor may be seen
Arising as the misty breath
Of Nature's ever-living Death.

And yet the yew lives longer than
The grey historic mind of Man
In Erin of the Grave-yards where
These ghostly cloudlets haunt the air.

'Tis thus my heart would share its breath
Of Life with ever-present Death,
The while its spirit longs to live
For what but Timeless God can give.

THE FRAGRANT NAME

Fermanagh is a fragrant name
To one who as a child,
Saw garden roses growing tame
And violets growing wild;
But in these long and later years
Fermanagh is a scene,
Which dreamy eyes with distant tears
Keep ever fresh and green.

The light of many a lovely eye
Now closed forevermore,
Still shines from out the flowers that lie

Upon Lough Erne's shore ;
And the modest little daisies meek
That grow where daisies grew,
Retain the blush of many a cheek
Now dust beneath the dew.

Fermanagh is a fragrant name
To one who as a child,
Saw garden flowers growing tame
And wood-vines running wild ;
But O ! that I were where I was,
Near Devinish Island's waves,
Where the holy incense of the haws
Still sanctifies the graves.

THE HOLY HANDS

The holy hands that Durer painted,
The crowned madonna of Raphael,
Models only by Genius sainted,
And damned, perchance, in the depths of Hell.

THE GRAVE OF GERALD GRIFFIN¹²

Here must my heart beat the faster, O Bard !
Here at your grave in this old grassy yard,
Where my spirit is struck by the delicate beams
From butter-cups scattered like dream-shattered
dreams.

Thirty and two of your brothers lie here
Awaiting the end of no wind-withered year,
For dreaming they are of those sun-setting hours,
When Heaven shall rise like a full moon of flowers.

Brothers they were and as Brothers they now
Lie humbly together still bound by their vow,
But, alas! that a Bard and a Dramatist pure
Should rest on this hillside unknown and obscure.

O Maker of dreams from the haze of the dawn
O Maker of dreams from the mist further on,
I stand by your grave as a pilgrim who trod
To the dust of a saint still ungathered by God.

I stand by your grave, but the Poet in me
Displaces the Pilgrim in one who would be
As a poet indeed, with a lyric of praise
For your soul in the mist and your heart in the haze.

With a song like the Shannon's sweet musical joy,
That flooded the hours when you were a boy,
Or a song like the Lee's with its mystical mirth
Flowing on through your hours now Timeless on
earth.

But 'tis only a fancy, the wish of a fool,
That the pupil should sing like the master, whose
school
Held Simplicity high 'mong its lyrical laws,
So the poor little effort I offer must pause.

For the Poet in me at your grave must give way
To the Pilgrim distracted who came for to pray,
That his resurrection, like your's, happy Bard,
May in Ireland be from a green chapel yard.

O Spirit whose life was a Drama of Dreams,
Taking leave of you here on this hillock, it seems
To my sorrowful self that these larks in the sky,
Sing a poet's "Farewell" to a rhymers "Goodbye."

THE SIMPLETON

I am as one with foolish ways
Made simple by the moon-light's beams,
Demanding dreams from empty days
That come and pass like empty dreams.

And so I am as one away
Among the Fairy Folk, until
Some Sorrow comes to fill the day
I thought that only Joy could fill.

THE THREE FRIENDS

O Bard of God and sacred bird
Of that pure Isle where saints repose,
My Guardian Angel, having heard
Your heavenly song, from me arose
To sing with you before the Throne;
And since we left that holy sod,
One longs again to see Tyrone
And One to soar in song to God.

TO THE ANGEL AXEL

Angel of dole,
Who stood on guard
At the soul
Of Columkille the Bard,

Your Brother heard
No sadder sound
In the word
Of Adam exile bound,

Than the echoed woe
Of your ward and saint
O'er the flow
And ebb of the Foyle's complaint,

When by command
He left his coast,
And a band
Of earth's Angelic Host,

Who sang to him
Their sweet goodbye,
In the hymn
I've heard, when even I

Left Erinn's shore
Against my will,
As did of yore
Your Columkille.

THE GREATEST FEAST

The greatest Christian feast by far,
—Since Christmas only has a star—
Is Easter with its sun, without
Which Christmas would be dark as Doubt.

BARONSCOURT¹³

In Baronscourt the loughs are laid
Like massive mirrors on the lawn,
Where Nature peeping from the shade
Beholds Her beauty partly gone.
For Baronscourt is now a Park
Of tidy places in Tyrone,
Where many tumbled ruins mark
Our fathers' gardens long unsown.

In Baronscourt the pheasant cock
Each morning crows to break his heart,
While the pretty woodland-pigeons flock
To scatter soon and pair apart.
And though the deer in timid herds
Raise not their heads to sniff the wind,
I fear for all the native birds
That sing among their foreign kind.

In Baronscourt the ancient farms
Are now the meadows of a Lord,
Whose mansion stands among the charms
[111]

Once guarded by a chieftain's sword.
For the famous little island fort
Of the haughty Clan Mac Hugh, adorns
The great domain of Baronscourt
'Neath the Castle of the Abercorns.

O Baronscourt your Saxon name
Is not as sweet as Lurgymore,
Nor are your flowers, nor is your fame
As fair as in the days of yore.
For much within your Lordship's wall
Belongs to our brave fathers, bred
Where the constant cuckoos call and call
In vain to God and the angry Dead.

THE BOOTED HENS

In secret places strange and wild,
E'en to the wonder of a child,
The Wee Folk cobble little boots,
For birds that scratch the lusmore's roots.

And every night the Leprahaun,
Must finish ere the Streak of Dawn,
A pair of boots for every hen,
That scratches on the graves of men.

Now Katty Shields in Kilnagrude,
One morning went to feed her brood,
And finding all the hens arrayed
In boots, she cursed the cobbler's trade.

And since that morning long ago,
She is always out at heel and toe,
In a pair of brogues, the like of which
Might well be found behind a ditch.

For she had cursed the Leprahaun,
Who finishes before the dawn,
A pair of boots for every hen
That scratches on the graves of men.

A LABORER

I knew an humble working-man, who was
A credit to his conscience and its laws
Which he obeyed—the spirit and the letter—
Nor could a learned saint do any better.

TO FATHER PROUT

(Author of "The Bells of Shandon")

O Jester of the droll Hibernian tongue,
Huge Grecian brow and dim Horatian eyes,
I saw the grave from which you shall arise
In Shandon's shade, while the bells of which you
 sung
So sadly, that the Gael has heard them rung
 In exiled dreams, were shaking from the skies
 Such music as no dreamer could surmise,
For they seemed to me as though in Heaven hung.

'Twas morning; and the songful larks had shared
Their words among the many-noted chimes,
When suddenly the choir ceased, and I,
A lyric-lover, having well compared
Its efforts with your own immortal rhymes,
Proclaim your famous song a plagiary.

A WATERFORD WONDER¹⁴

The falling stars forever croon
A dirge for Adam's Paradise,
Which comes a-down the distant skies
In the mirrored ruins of the moon

That I have seen slip through the air,
Behind the Comeragh Hills. And old
Shaun Beg once told me he was told
That the casted moons are lying there

Beyond the mountain-meadow bars:
"For the broken fields of Paradise,"
Said he, "must lie beneath the skies
That weep so many falling stars."

THE SONG-MAKER

From the Mind to the pencil and paper,
How long is the journey? How far
Have the thoughts of me travelled? O Taper,
You know as my sun-shining star.

From the Soul to the Song of the poet,
Was the journey a month or a mile?
Ah! Girl, I know not, but I know it
Was sweet being with you the while.

THE RED-BREAST

The plaintive robin is so good,
And sings so sadly at his nest,
He must remember the Holy Rood
From which he came with a crimson breast.

But what he sang or what he wore
Before he flew against the Cross,
E'en Nature's Self cannot restore,
Nor does his grief concern the loss.

THE MESSENGERS

Michael daily labors
With but a single wing,
Bearing as his burden
Justice from the King:

But Gabriel is pinioned
With double wings unfurled,
For Mercy passes Justice
On their journey to this world.

THE TWO MOUNTAINS

When falls the twilight, my spirit wanders
To a bardic Isle through a cloud of dreams,
Where the quiet moon like a poet ponders
On the stars that lie in Tyronian streams.
For the nights are still as they were in Erinn,
With their flowing silver in brook and rill,
And the whin-bush wears what it has been wearing
'Tween Bessy Mountain and Beauty Hill.

And there at dawn I have stood astounded,
As the lark arose with his falling tune,
Which o'er the Strule's quiet valley sounded
Like a slumber song for the dreamy moon;
While the powdered crystals and pearls, blended
In mist and haze, formed a mystic grill,
Between my soul and the sun suspended
O'er Bessy Mountain and Beauty Hill.

The linnets green and the tuneful thrushes
Sing from the dawn to the star-lit sky,
While in the meadow the corn-crake hushes
His lonely song as I pass him by.
The yellow plovers fly o'er the heather,
And the whistling notes of a golden bill
Reveal the black-bird and his mate together,
'Tween Bessy Mountain and Beauty Hill.

But the twilight tunes in that river valley
Are dewy sweet to my dreamy soul,
While the cuckoos linger and the robins dally

In the evening shade for to sing their dole ;
The Bluish-Grey and the Scarlet-Breasted,
Which call and mourn in a music shrill,
For the clans that rest where they long have rested
'Tween Bessy Mountain and Beauty Hill.

THE GRAVE OF MICHAEL DAVITT (Straid, Co. Mayo)

O Womanly Erinn, your bardic rehearsal
Of troubles and sorrows are private to you,
But what of the joy that is now universal
For those who won Freedom, the Rus and the
Jew?
And what of the Man who went over full-hearted,
To carry his cause to a nation afar,
Where the snow-drift that covered the bloody de-
parted,
Could well mark the ermine that covered the
Czar?

O what of the Patriot sprung from your peoples,
Who dreamed of a cause that shall circle the
earth,
And what of this victory now and the steeples,
That surely have bells in the land of his birth:
And what of the Jews who shall journey Tomorrow,
As pilgrims from Kieff to where Davitt is laid?
O Woman arise from your own private sorrow
For the clan that bore Christ has a prophet in
Straid.

TO OSSIAN

Great Ossian of the thunder-tossing horde
That fought behind the echoes of your song,
Your death-defying music is as strong
As when it strengthened Finn's, your father's
sword;
As when it brought the chieftain from his board
To meet the terrifying Danish throng;
Nor has it grown the weaker through these long
Sad years which England lengthened with her cord!

For we who sang your poems in the Dun,
Are the military masters on the slopes
Gained by the piper's music and our nerve:
God knows the many battles that we won
For Presidents, Kings, Emperors and Popes
And yet—O Son of famous Finn—we serve.

THE PARISH POET

Among the old things, of the old times,
Sits Gracie O'Gara, who sings
My own rhymes.

For I set a song, to the light tread,
Of Gracie's daughter, who long
Has been dead.

Well was it made, in truest praise,
Of a light-hearted little one, laid
Where the hares graze.

And as sweet as Her voice, is that song to me,
When her old mother chooses her choice
From all poetry.

If it were not for Her, and the spoiling of it,
'Tis I would be selling it where
It would bring a good bit.

But the music is much like a cuckoo's call,
And 'tis only an old woman's touch,
That could serve it at all.

So the song of my heart shall never cease,
'Till the lips of an neighbor shall part
In dumb peace.

For among the old things, of the old times,
Sits Gracie O'Gara, who sings
My own rhymes.

IRELAND OF THE TWILIGHTS

When tuneful twilights hush the skies to sleep
And set the waiting stars to active dreams,
I wander to the Wraith-World of your streams,
Green hills, and mountains wonderfully steep.
A World in which the boughs of willows sweep
Their supple forms around the moon-light's
beams ;

A ghostly World, in which each brooklet seems
Part of the slowly-moving starry deep.

But when the dew of Heaven's nocturnal Grief
Has freely spent its splendor on your strand,
I come, as comes your own soul to the Dawn's
Untroubled West, with stories past belief
And dreams unknown, save in that Shadow-Land
Where died your Poets singing like the swans.

THE POEM-PRAYERS OF THE GAEL

The Lord has many Lilies rare,
That grow like orchids in the air
On the branches of the Knowledge Trees,
While the Winds are blowing from the Woods.

Nor is there any blossomed bough,
Nor is there any flower now
On earth arrayed like one of these,
In the Breezes blowing from the Woods.

For they are Lilies of the Word,
Being poem-prayers from which the Lord
Still gathers the perfumeries,
That the Winds are blowing from the Woods.

TYRONIAN THOUGHTS

Thanks be to God for the blood that should rule
The Tyronian vale of the long river Strule,
That was wealthy with salmon and wonderful
pearls,
Ere the Red hand of Royal O'Neill was an Earl's!

Thanks be to God that the flowers of Tyrone
Still bloom on the graves that her children should
own ;

That the grass of Ardstraw is as sacred and green,
As when blest by its bishop the saintly Eugene !

O thanks be to God for the Faith that is still
As true as when taught by the pure Columkille,
To the heart of a people still strong at the core,
Though the Red hand of Royal O'Neill is no more !

THE SNAKE

Behold the symbol of what must fall !

Cold of blood in the sun-beams, numb
For numerous days, and cursed to crawl
The earth while big with venemous young.

The symbol of Pride and Satan dumb
With the evil gift of a double tongue.

BY THE RIVER SUIR

God's love to the girl

Who once gave me a drink,
As clear as a pearl,
From the broad river's brink :

May her heart stay as pure
As that sweet river's source,
That her soul like the Suir
May do good on its course !

A LITTLE STORY

Here is a little story
I found beneath the moss
Of many years, and a hoary
Dead vine on a Gaelic cross.

“Pray for the soul of Francey
O’Carolan, unknown
Save in the Realm of Fancy,
Here lie his flesh and bone.”

“And for the soul of his Lover
As a Dream beside him here,
Unknown to all save the plover
And the lark of their native sphere;”

“Which is the Realm of Fancy
Where Rosaleen, unknown,
And the fabled poet Francey
O’Carolan have flown.”

“That God may send them pardon
By the buoyant birds above,
For returning to His Garden
Of Eden with their love;”

“And that this stone’s protection
May keep the Dream beside
The Dust, till the Resurrection
Of the Bard and his secret Bride.”

Here are the verses hoary
With moss I found on a stone,
And I would that the cross, the story,
The grave and the dust were my own.

THE WINDOW OF ST. AGNES

Agnes, whom the artists paint
With all their many colors warm,
I would but see you as a saint
Within the modest marble's form.

For though this chapel-window bright,
—Being painted well in ruby red—
Now woos the sun's symbolic light,
With the Martyr's crimson that you bled,

I would not have your form in these
Rich gaudy garments, for your pure
And childish face seems ill at ease,
Among the raiments that allure.

So Agnes, I would only see
Your image in that marble's form,
Which the whiter gleams with modesty
When the shining Sun would make it warm.

HOPE'S SONG

Silent is the dark
Before the sun-beams come,
Yet if it were not for the lark,
The dawn would be as dumb,

And thus my soul would be
As dark and still as night,
If 'twere not for the minstrelsy
Of Hope that sings of Light.

BY WAY OF THE WIND

By way of the wind my soul would speed
To the river Strule, where rush and reed
Conceal the moor-cock and the hen,
And the rusty helmets of moldy men.

By way of the wind my soul would go
To the river Strule, where its wavelets flow
O'er the ancient fords unknown to all,
Save the dead O'Donnells from Donegal.

By way of the wind my soul would sail
To the river Strule, be it breeze or gale;
But she is bound and the winds are free
To take but a song from the soul of me.

THE PROVINCES¹⁵

*O God that I
May arise with the Gael
To the song in the sky
Over Inisfail!*

Ulster, your dark
Mold for me;
Munster, a lark
Hold for me!

Connaght, a *caoine*
Croon for me;
Leinster, a mean
Stone for me!

*O God that I
May arise with the Gael
To the song in the sky
Over Inisfail!*

NOTES

(¹) Ballad of the Bees—*Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, a 15th. MS. in Royal Irish Academy contains the germ of this story, though it is only partly followed in the ballad. Tradition has it that St. David of Wales sent the first bees to Erin by St. Baroc, who kept them at his cell near what is now the ruined church of Kilbarrick just outside of Dublin. But the Brehon Laws were written centuries before Baroc's time and they go into minor particulars relative to bees.

(²) *ceanaban*—cannaban, the bog cotton.

(³) *rann*—a verse.

(⁴) Clodagh—A little stream that flows beneath the ancient oaks of Curraghmore, Waterford. Lusmores—*lusmor*. Often pronounced with the English plural sound as in the text. It is the greatest fairy plant of the Gael.

(⁵) *lios*—a circular fort. *Rath*—also a round earthen fort. Pronounced *raw* in Gaelic but *rath* in many districts. *Cailin Deas*—pretty girl.

(⁶) Francey O'Kane. A street ballad was written on his death, but it seems to have been lost and forgotten with the exception of two lines and it is at the end of this verse that they are now. Men of the Creeve—The O'Cahans or O'Kanes were called in the old times *Fir-na-craibhe*, i.e., the men

of the Creeve from a place called Eas Craibhe and now known as Cutt's Fishery in Keenaght Barony, Derry.

(⁷) standing stones—On the side of the mountain south of Newtownstewart, Tyrone. Grave battles were fought here in the old days and the people do be saying that those who lie there are all O'Neills.

(⁸) *sidhe*—shee, the fairies or Good People.

(⁹) *siubhloir*—a traveller, but in the North-West it is often applied to a peddler.

(¹⁰) The Mother's Revenge.—This historical event happened in the year 1439. The two bodies were burned in the hut and the whole, being reduced to ashes, formed a mound which was still in evidence fifty years ago a little south of the ruins of Inch Castle.

(¹¹) The Green Road.—Sixty years ago it was as grey as the dust of a town, but the farmers were evicted from the district and their ruined homes are now the haunts of Scottish deer.

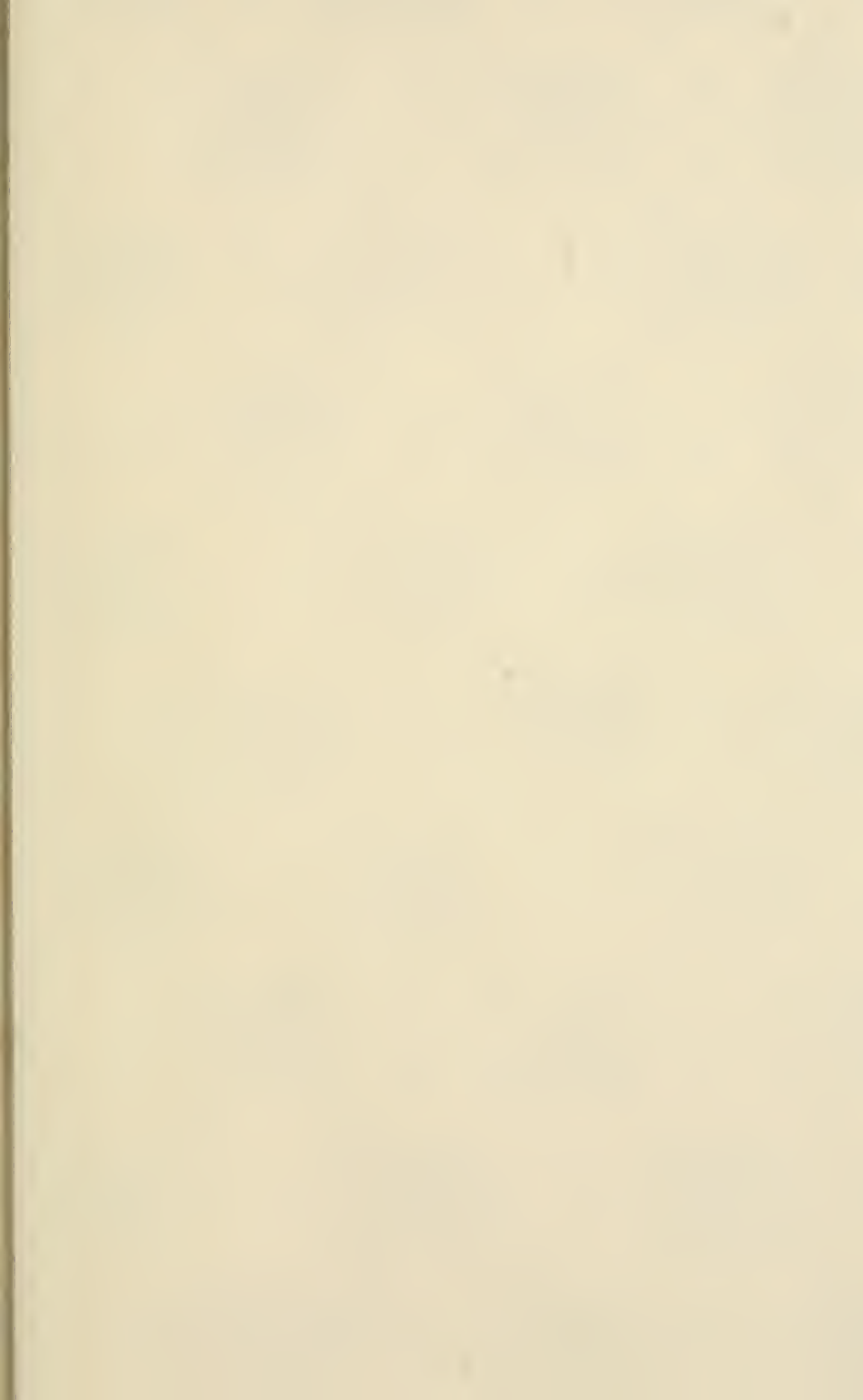
(¹²) Grave of Gerald Griffin.—In the little cemetery of the Irish Christian Brothers, Our Lady's Mount, Cork.

(¹³) Baronscourt.—The castle and domain of the Duke of Abercorn of the House of Hamilton.

(¹⁴) casted moons—It was in the Gaelic that Shaun told the tale and it is what he said that the moons were casted, shed, or thrown off in process of growth.

(¹⁵) *caoine*—a cry or lamentation.

It is here that the book ends
and it is here that a prayer is asked
for the soul of the scribe who finished it,
in his native New York,
on the Feast of Mura of Fahan,
1917.





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